

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, SOPN, CH. SF. US, UR

SUBJ: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW BY PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA OF DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR (DRM)

1. SUMMARY AND COMMENT: IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH RADICAL,
PARIS-PUBLISHED BIMONTHLY "AFRIQUE-ASIE" PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA
TOOK ISSUE WITH THE AFRICAN POLICIES OF BOTH THE US AND CHINA,
AND GAVE HIS VIEWS ON THE PROBLEMS OF THE HORN AND SOUTHERN
AFRICA. ALTHOUGH DISAGREEING WITH THE CHINESE THESIS THAT
PRINCIPAL THREAT TO AFRICA IS SOVIET "SOCIAL IMPERIALISM"--
RATHER THAN AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AND SOUTH AFRICA'S RACIST
REGIME, WHICH HE TERMS MAIN ENEMY--HE GAVE FULL EXPLANATION
OF CHINESE RATIONALE AND CREDITED PRC LEADERS WITH GOOD FAITH.
WHILE IT IS NOT PLEASANT TO HAVE OUR OWN GOOD FAITH DENIED,
IT IS UNUSUAL IN MADAGASCAR TO SEE SO MUCH PRIDE OF PLACE
GIVEN TO ANTI-SOVIET VIEWS OF CHINESE, EVEN IF IT IS ONLY TO
DISAGREE WITH THEM, AND EVEN MORE UNUSUAL TO SEE THEM ARTICULATED
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BY THE CHIEF OF STATE. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. INTERVIEW WAS CARRIED IN ISSUE NO 149 (NOV18-DEC 11)
OF "AFRIQUE-ASIE". INTERVIEWER WAS DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATION
SIMON MALLEY, AND FOLLOWING SUBJECTS WERE COVERED.

3. CHINESE POLICIES IN AFRICA. NEARLY ONE QUARTER OF

INTERVIEW WAS DEVOTED TO RATSIRAKA'S ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON CHINESE POLICY IN AFRICA. RATSIRAKA SAID ONE COULD ONLY UNDERSTAND CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR MOBUTU AND NUMERY AND ITS OPPOSITION TO NETO IF ONE ACCEPTED THE CHINESE THESIS THAT SOVIET "SOCIAL IMPERIALISM" IS A GREATER THREAT TO AFRICA THAN AMERICAN IMPERIALISM. RATSIRAKA SAID THAT HE DOES NOT BELIEVE THIS THESIS, THAT HE THINKS AMERICAN IMPERIALISM, SUPPORTED BY ITS SOUTH AFRICAN ALLIES, REMAINS THE BIGGEST THREAT. THEREFORE, HE COULD NOT AGREE WITH CHINESE POLICY. HE RECOUNTED AT LENGTH HIS DISCUSSIONS ON THIS SUBJECT DURING HIS TRIP TO CHINA IN 1976 AND COMMENTED THAT THE CHINESE WERE THINKING IN LONGER TERMS THAN THE MALAGASY. HOWEVER, MADAGASCAR COULD NOT LOOK FORWARD TO THE YEAR 2,000 AND HAD TO DEAL WITH THE MOST IMMEDIATE THREAT. HE NOTED THAT THE ADMITTED DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN MADAGASCAR AND CHINA DID NOT PREVENT GOOD RELATIONS. THIS WAS UNLIKE THE CASE OF FRANCE WHICH, IN THE DAYS OF THE OLD COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, INSISTED ON MALAGASY ALIGNMENT WITH FRENCH POLICY ON INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS.

4. U.S. POLICY IN AFRICA. ACCORDING TO RATSIRAKA, HE NEVER EXPECTED THE ACCESSION OF PRESIDENT CARTER TO LEAD TO ANY FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN AMERICAN POLICY. AMERICAN POLICY "DEVOLVES FROM THE LOGIC OF A SYSTEM, THE LOGIC OF A CIVILIZATION, OF A SOCIETY, EVEN OF A CONCEPTION OF DEVELOPMENT OR A PHILOSOPHY OF DEVELOPMENT." THE MANNER OF IMPLEMENTATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAS CHANGED; PRESIDENT CARTER OBVIOUSLY IS NOT AN ADVENTURER. BUT BASICALLY THE WEST KNOWS WHAT IT WANTS. IT IS GOING TO ABANDON SMITH IN ORDER TO FURTHER CONSOLIDATE VORSTER. SOUTH AFRICA IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF AMERICAN GLOBAL STRATEGY AND IS AMERICA'S BEST CLIENT. THE CHANGE IN AMERICAN TECHNIQUES INVOLVE PUTTING ANDREW YOUNG, A BLACK AMERICAN, TO THE FORE RATHER THAN A KISSINGER OR A CYRUS VANCE, BUT FUNDAMENTALLY THE POLICY REMAINS THE SAME.

5. THE HORN OF AFRICA. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA QUALIFIED THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN WAR AS ATROCIOUS AND CAPABLE OF LEADING TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TWO SOCIALIST STATES. HE SAID IT IS IN THE INTERESTS OF IMPERIALISTS TO HAVE THIS CONFLICT PROLONGED FOR IT DISTRACTS FROM THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND IN SOUTH AFRICA. RATSIRAKA CLAIMED THAT MADAGASCAR WAS THE FIRST TO HAVE THOUGHT OF A CONFEDERATION OF SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IN THE HORN OF AFRICA AT THE TIME OF HAILE SELASSIE'S DECLINE. BUT THEN THE USSR, EITHER THINKING THAT IT HAD ORIGINATED THE IDEA, OR BEING ATTRACTED TO IT, TOOK IT FOR ITS OWN. THIS UNFORTUNATELY LED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, WHO ARE TRADITIONALLY OPPOSED TO THE SOVIET UNION, OPPOSING THE CONCEPT OF CONFEDERATION, WHICH NEVERTHELESS A GOOD ONE.

PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA SAID HE HAS A SECRET PLAN TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM OF THE HORN, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT DISCLOSE IT. AT ANY RATE, BEFORE ANYTHING COULD BE DONE THE OPPONENTS WOULD HAVE TO COME TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, SINCE THIS IS THE INEVITABLE SEQUEL TO WAR. BARRETT

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6. SOUTH AFRICA. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA RECALLED THAT AFTER A VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA ABOARD SHIP IN 1967-68 AS A NAVAL OFFICER, HE HAD WRITTEN A REPORT WHICH CONCLUDED THAT ONLY AN ARMED STRUGGLE COULD BRING ABOUT A SOLUTION TO APARTHEID. HE HIMSELF DID NOT BELIEVE IN CONCEPT OF "FRONTLINE STATES", FOR WAR IS WAR; THIS IS A CONFLICT WHICH CONCERNS ALL OF AFRICA, AND THERE CAN BE NO FRONT LINES. HE DID NOT THINK A DIALOGUE WOULD GET ANYWHERE. THE SANCTIONS RECENTLY VOTED AT THE UN WERE JUST MANEUVERS. ONLY FULL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE OF PRODUCING RESULTS, BUT THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC AND STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE U.S.

7. SOUTH AFRICA CONTINUED. RATSIRAKA SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN A PAN-AFRICAN FORCE TO FIGHT A WAR AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. SUCH A FORCE WOULD ONLY BE POSSIBLE IN TERMS OF CONVENTIONAL WARFARE AND WOULD EVEN BE DIFFICULT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS DEFINITELY NOT A FEASIBLE CONCEPT

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IN A GUERRILLA WAR. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT NOW HOW THE WHITE SOUTH AFRICANS WHO HAVE NO PLACE TO GO WOULD REACT WITH THEIR BACKS TO THE WALL. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER THEY WOULD ACCEPT TO LIVE AS A MINORITY, LIKE THE BLACK MINORITY IN THE U.S. SINCE SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT USE THE ATOMIC BOMB IF REDUCED TO DESPERATION, IT IS BETTER NOT TO DRIVE IT INTO A CORNER BUT PREFERABLE TO LEAVE TERMS OF A SETTLEMENT FLEXIBLE. HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT THE ONLY ANSWER TO THE RACIAL PROBLEM IN SOUTH AFRICA WAS FOR RACE TO DISAPPEAR BY INTERMARRIAGE.

8. SOUTH AFRICAN CONTINENT. RATSIRAKA WAS ALSO ASKED DIRECTLY WHETHER THE OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES COULD NOT USE THEIR ECONOMIC LEVERAGE ON THE WEST TO FORCE IT TO APPLY FULL ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON SOUTH AFRICA. HE REPLIED WITH SOME SCORN THAT SINCE THE AFRICANS COULD NOT AGREE ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS THE PRICE OF COFFEE OR COCOA, THEY COULD OBVIOUSLY NOT UNITE SUFFICIENTLY TO CARRY OUT SUCH A SCHEME.

9. SAHROUI AND FRANCE. PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA EXPRESSED HIS USUAL SUPPORT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF SAHROUI. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE DID NOT BELIEVE IN AND WOULD NOT JOIN A "HOLY FRANCO-AFRICAN ALLIANCE."

10. TO BE CONTINUED. CONTINUATION OF THIS INTERVIEW IS TO BE CARRIED IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF "AFRIQUE-ASIE" AND WILL DEAL WITH THE INDIAN OCEAN, RELATIONS WITH GREAT POWERS, MEANING OF NON-ALIGNMENT, AND OTHER SUBJECTS. COPIES OF THIS AND NEXT INSTALLMENT WILL BE FORWARDED BY POUCH. BARRETT

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